

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
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FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, UK, EI
SUBJECT: GARRET FITZGERALD SPEAKS ON NORTHERN
IRELAND ISSUE

REFERENCE: STATE 149756

1. SUMMARY: FINE GAEL PARTY LEADER FITZGERALD
DELIVERED MAJOR SPEECH ON NI ISSUE AUGUST 20.
INTER ALIA HE SAID THE SOUTH HAS NOT DONE ITS
PART TO PROMOTE "DIVERSITY IN UNITY" -- THE KEY
TO BRINGING NORTH AND SOUTH CLOSER TOGETHER
AND OUTLINED WHAT HE EXPECTS FROM FINE GAEL
STUDY OF NORTH-SOUTH RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. SPEAKING AT ANNUAL MICHAEL COLLINS COMMEMORATION,
FITZGERALD ASSERTED THAT SOUTH HAS STRAYED FROM
COLLINS' VISION OF "DIVERSITY IN UNITY," AND HAS
DONE LITTLE TO CONVINCE UNIONISTS OF ITS GOODWILL
OR OF BENEFITS OF UNITY. INDEED, IT HAS DONE
MUCH TO PERSUADE THEM TO THE CONTRARY. FITZGERALD
HERE CITED IRISH CIVIL WAR, IRISH LANGUAGE RE-
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QUIREMENTS, 1937 CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES AND (IN
SWIPE AT FIANNA FAIL) IRISH GOVERNMENT MINISTERS'
INVOLVEMENT IN 1970 GUN RUNNING TO IRA. CONFIDENCE
AND CONDITIONS PROPITIOUS FOR UNITY COULD BE
RESTORED ONLY GRADUALLY.

3. NOTING SOUTH'S LIP SERVICE TO UNITY BUT UNDERLYING

AMBIVALENCE, INDIFFERENCE OR EVEN HOSTILITY TO IDEAL AND ADJUSTMENTS IT WOULD REQUIRE, FITZGERALD SAID CHALLENGE OF RETHINKING NORTH-SOUTHRELATIONSHIP MUST BE FACED. "WE OWE IT TO OUR FELLOW IRISHMEN IN THE NORTH TRAPPED BY HISTORY INTO AN APPALLING TRAGEDY OF VIOLENCE;" AND "IF WE FAIL TO MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM, THE RESULTANT CHAOS COULD ENGULF THE SOUTH."

4. FITZGERALD SAID "DIPLOMATIC SILENCE" BY SOUTHERN POLITICIANS ON THE ISSUE, NECESSARY AT TIMES IN PAST, IS NOT VALID TACTIC NOW. FRANK DISCUSSION OF NORTH-SOUTHRELATIONS CAN OCCUR BECAUSE THERE ARE NO NEGOTIATIONS IN PROGRESS OR IN PROSPECT BETWEEN NORTHERN PARTIES AND BECAUSE THERE IS NEW NORTHERN MOOD. THOUGH INCHOATE AND CONFUSED, IT SEEKS NEW APPROACHES TO INTERNAL SELF-GOVERNMENT AND RELATIONS WITH SOUTH. MANY CONTACTS FROM BOTH PARTS OF COMMUNITY HAVE EXPRESSED CONVICTION TO FITZGERALD THAT "IMPORTANT CHANGES OCCURRING IN HITHERTO FIXED ATTITUDES." THERE IS FRUSTRATION WITH BRITAIN, BUT ALSO WITH REPUBLIC WHICH HAS NEVER OFFERED CLEAR OR CONSTRUCTIVE IDEA ABOUT RESOLVING NORTH-SOUTH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RELATIONSHIP. IF NEITHER DOES SO, CURRENT RELATIVELY QUIET SITUATION COULD BECOME EXPLOSIVE. THUS, FITZGERALD HAD PROPOSED FINE GAEL POLICY STUDY.

5. STUDY WILL ASSESS COMMON NORTH-SOUTH INTERESTS, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, CULTURAL -- WITHIN THE ISLAND AND IN BROADER CONTEXT. IT WILL EXAMINE DIFFERENT MODELS OF POLITICAL ORGANIZATION, WHICH MUST SAFEGUARD SEPARATE "SENSE OF IDENTITY" OF DIFFERING TRADITIONS WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF COMMON ACTION IN AREAS OF COMMON INTERESTS. FITZGERALD HOPES STUDY WILL: BOLSTER APPARENT NORTHERN OPENNESS TO NEW IDEAS; MAKE CLEAR THAT SOUTHSEEKS UNITY OF ACTION ON COMMON INTERESTS -- NOT TO THREATEN UNIONIST TRADITION; CREATE MORE CONSTRUCTIVE CLIMATE FOR DISCUSSION BY NORTHERN POLITICIANS AFTER UK ELECTIONS; PROMOTE REALISM IN SOUTH ON NORTHERN ISSUE AND NORTH-SOUTH RELATIONS. FITZGERALD STRESSED THAT AGREED DEVOLVED SELF-GOVERNMENT IN NORTH

IS PRECONDITION NOT ONLY FOR PEACE THERE BUT
ALSO FOR VALID DISCUSSION OF NORTH-SOUTH
RELATIONSHIP.

6. EDITORIAL REACTION HERE GENERALLY FAVORABLE.
IRISH TIMES THOUGHT FITZGERALD A BIT TOO CONTRITE
ABOUT SOUTH'S PAST ROLE BUT SAID ADDRESS HELPS
"KEEP OUR OWN THINKING FRESH AND POSITIVE." IRISH
INDEPENDENT CALLED THE SPEECH ONE OF RARE REALISM
AND CLARITY. IRISH PRESS (CLOSE TO FIANNA FAIL)
SEEMS SKEPTICAL ABOUT NEW NORTHERN MOOD, BUT
AGREES THAT SOUTH SHOULD CRITICALLY EXAMINE IRISH

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SOCIETY AND BE PREPARED TO CHANGE IT -- NOT JUST
TO ATTRACT THE NORTH BUT ALSO TO ACHIEVE A BETTER
SOCIETY FOR ALL.

7. COMMENT: AS DEPARTMENT AWARE (REFTEL) FIANNA
FAIL AND LABOR ALSO PREPARING STUDIES. FITZGERALD
IS PROBABLY MORE KEENLY AWARE THAN MOST SOUTHERNERS
OF NORTHERN TRENDS. IT SEEMS DOUBTFUL, HOWEVER,
THAT THE NEW NORTHERN MOOD HE DISCERNS WILL
TRANSLATE EASILY INTO GREATER MAJORITY COMMUNITY
SUPPORT FOR THE AGREED DEVOLVED GOVERNMENT HE
INSISTS IS NECESSARY FOR PROGRESS. FITZGERALD'S
ADDRESS MAY MORE READILY BE SEEN AS AN EFFORT TO
TELL THE IRISH PUBLIC THAT BOLD PRESCRIPTIONS
FOR CHANGE ARE NECESSARY IN THE SOUTH AND IN
NORTH-SOUTH RELATIONSHIPS; AND THAT FINE GAEL IS

PREPARING TO PROVIDE THE COUNTRY WITH LEADERSHIP
IN THIS RESPECT. AT GREATER LENGTH THAN WE CAN
RECALL FROM ANYONE HERE IN RECENT YEARS, HE CALLS
UPON THE SOUTH TO ACKNOWLEDGE PAST ERRORS ON THE
ISSUE AND APPROACH IT WITH FRESH AND REALISTIC
IDEAS. SHANNON
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